practice of lobbying to unique to the American system in which US firms offer specialised expertise. Government are not aware of firms in India operating in the US as registered lobbyists.

Killing of Indian fisherman by Sri Lankan Navy

655. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of Indian fisherman have recently been killed by the Sri Lankan Navy in the Palk Straits;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what steps Government have taken or propose to take it stop such killings of Indian fisherman on the Sri Lankan Navy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) Between September 1 and October 8, 1993, a total of seven incidents of attacks on Indian fisherman in the Palk Straits, leading to loss of life, injuries and damage to property, were reported to the Government. Each of these incidents was taken up by the Government with the Government of Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka denied Sri Lankan Navy's involvement in all these incidents except the one which took place on the night of September 1/2 and in which two Indian fisherman died. According to Sri Lanka Government, the firing by Sri Lanka Navy at an Indian fisherman boat on September 1/2 was a case of mistaken identity.

At the Foreign Secretary level discussions held between the two countries in Delhi on 15th October, 1993, the Indian side conveyed its concern and unhappiness over the recent incidents. Both sides agreed on the need for effective measures to prevent such incidents in future.

Lankan attacks on Indian fisherman

656. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the incidents of shooting on Indian fisherman in the months of September and October, 1993;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have lodged protest and demanded compensation for the families of victims from Sri Lankan Government; and

(d) what steps are being taken to restore the traditional rights of Indian fisherman to fish and navigate in the historical Waters between India and Sri Lanka as guaranteed under Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1947?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) Between September 1 and October 8, 1993, the Government's attention has been drawn to a total of seven incidents of attacks on Indian fishermen in the Palk Straits, leading to loss of life, injuries and damage to property. Each of these incidents was taken up by the Government with the Government of Sri Lanka. The Government conveyed its deep concern and unhappiness at these incidents to the Government of Sri Lanka, and also filed with the later, the claims for compensation for these incidents. Our concerns were also conveyed at Foreign Secretary level discussions between the two Governments held in Delhi on 15th October. The Government of Sri Lanka denied Sri Lankan Navy a involvement in all these incidents except the one which took place on the night of September 1/2 and in which two Indian fiherman died. Apcording to Sri Lanka Government, the firing by Sri Lankan Navy at an Indian fishing boat on September 1/2, was a case of mistaken identity.

(c) The matter of restoration of the traditional rights of Indian fisherman in the Palk Straits area, as guaranteed under the Maritime Boundary Agreements

of 1974 and 1976, has been discussed by the Government with the Government of Sri Lanka, including at the Foreign Secretary level talks held recently.

Amendment to Haj Act

657. SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL alias MEEM AFZAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the amendment of Haj Act is under positive consideration of Government;

(b) if so, what is the present stage of consideration; and

(c) by when a new bill is proposed to be introduced in the Parliament on the Haj Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Government have been planning to introduce a new bill on Haj to replace the existing Haj Committee Act (No. 51) of 1959.

(b) The legislative proposals to be incorporated in the Bill are under active consideration.

(c) The new Bill is proposed to be introduced at an early date, after all aspects have been examined.

New Sino-India border pact

658. SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new border policy with China was laid down by way of the new Sino-India border pact signed during the Prime Minister's visit to China;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what steps are being taken for implementation thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) During the Prime Minister's visit to China, the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility Along the Line of Actual Control on the India-China Border Areas was signed in Beijing on September 7, 1993.

(b) A copy of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic f China on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility Along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas, has been placed in the Parliament Library;

(c) Details regarding implementation of the agreement will be worked out by diplomatic and military experts under the India-China Joint working Group (JWG). The first meeting of the expert group is expected to be convened early next year.

Statement by Pakistan High Commissioner on Kashmir issue

659. SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the recent utterances of Pakistan High Commissioner regarding the Kashmir issue and its attempt to internationalise the dispute; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government with regard to the violation of the diplomatic ethics by the High Commissioner of Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Speaking to the press at Madras (1|9|93). Pakistan High Commissioner reportedly claims that Simla Agreement does not prohibit Pakistan from raising the Jammu & Kashmir issue at international fora. Pakistan High Commissioner also stated that Pakistan was willing to have Bilateral negotiations on the Kashmir issue.